

why it is so important that the NRA's twisted worldview must come before DC residents' wishes and safety.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

CONGRESS SHOULD NAME POST OFFICES, BUT NOT AT EXPENSE OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, on the subject of the marriage amendment, the House majority leader said earlier today, "It is our job to make the laws in this country. And as easy as life would be for us, if the most controversial bills we had to vote on was to rename a post office, that's not what we were elected to do."

I find it ironic that the majority leader used the naming of post offices, especially for this Congress. I have done my own research. As it turns out, this Republican Congress, the 108th Congress, the House and the other body, has been hard at work at naming post offices. In fact, under the Republican leadership, we have named an impressive 92 post offices, and we just did 4 more today.

We have also named 22 Federal buildings, passed 34 resolutions honoring athletic teams, and introduced 35 resolutions creating commemorative postage stamps. That is in stark contrast to when the Republicans first took control of the House in the 104th Congress. They only managed to name 12 post offices. This Congress has done 92.

In the 106th Congress, they only squeaked out a pitiful three resolutions honoring sports teams and sports achievements. Clearly, the 108th Congress, this Republican Congress, has proven to be the most adept at naming post offices and Federal buildings, and honoring sports achievements and conceiving of new postage stamps.

Now, let me tell you something; it takes a lot of time and effort to name a post office. First, you have to decide which post office. Then you have to figure out what name. Then you have to pick a name and build support for it among your colleagues. The final test is to get a vote on the name, which is no small feat when you consider that, historically, only 1 out of every 100 bills ever sees a floor vote. In this Republican-led Congress, however, 80 percent of the post office naming bills introduced in the House have actually passed. That is something to be proud of.

But while we have spent all this time naming post offices, we could have

been dealing with the problems which are facing the American people. After all, while this Congress is busy alleviating the apparent backlog of nameless post offices in America, we have lost 1.7 million private sector jobs. Median household incomes have fallen by more than \$1,500. Household bankruptcies have skyrocketed, and today we see in articles that health care costs in America are rising at close to three times the rate of inflation.

□ 2100

In Iraq, more than 1,000 Americans have been killed. Reconstruction has been pushed to the sidelines. There is mounting violence, and we have not found any weapons of mass destruction or had any oversight hearings in this Congress as to why we went to war on that premise.

Mr. Speaker, today the majority leader quoted former President John Kennedy in justifying the votes we had. So in the same spirit, I will quote President Kennedy: "To govern is to choose." And unfortunately this Congress, the Republican Congress, has made some tough choices. Time after time the Republican leadership has been forced to choose at their own making between naming post offices and using its control in the House, Senate, White House, and Supreme Court to improve the lives of millions of Americans. More often than not the Republican Congress has chosen to name post offices.

Please do not misunderstand. I am not opposed to naming post offices. In fact, I cosponsored a few of them myself. Congress should do these things, but we should not do it at the expense of our other responsibilities.

We should not do it as an excuse not to deal with the health care crisis, not to deal with the access to higher education crisis we have in America, not to deal with the fact that wages and income are stagnant in America, not to deal with the fact that we have a war being waged and we do not have a policy or a President that is cognizant of the fact that it is a burning morass, as three leading Republican Senators said last week.

We have only passed one of the 13 appropriations bills we are required to pass. We have not passed a Transportation bill that we are required to pass that would employ millions of Americans. We have not passed a higher education reauthorization bill as we are required to pass. We have not passed a budget under a Republican Congress. We have failed to reauthorize a series of things we are required to do, and yet we have taken on the responsibility of naming 92 new post offices.

Our Nation and economy rely on the most basic functions of this Congress, yet we have failed in both those activities. We can do better. Congress can name post offices and keep our Nation moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, Election Day is only weeks away. I hope when the American

people go to the polls, it will reflect on the kind of job this Congress has done. The Republican leadership made their priorities clear. The 108th Congress will be remembered for its leadership on the naming of post offices.

PROSECUTING GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COLE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the tremendous job our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines have been doing in prosecuting our global war on terror.

Just recently, I returned from a trip where I visited both the Afghan and Iraq theater of operations. Last year, I made a similar trip to Iraq, and now I can say with some certainty that we have made demonstrable progress.

Americans should not think we are without friends in this region. President Musharraf of Pakistan has been a brave and determined ally in the fight against terrorism. Strong leaders such as President Karzai and Prime Minister Allawi are beginning to emerge in Afghanistan and Iraq. They have put their lives on the line and trusted the word of the United States. We must not let them down, for our security is linked with their success in rebuilding their countries and defeating terrorists.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to Iraq, U.S. forces are achieving daily successes in confronting terrorists while Iraqi troops and police are starting to undertake the tough everyday work of rebuilding and defending a civil society. In a recent Armed Forces hearing, Army Colonel Michael Linnington, former brigade commander with the 101st Airborne Division, testified that it was not uncommon for his troops to be building schools by day and patrolling for insurgents at night. Or for that matter, it was not uncommon for U.S. troops to be fighting insurgents in one part of a town while helping with elections in another part. The troops believe in their mission and are committed to seeing it through.

Mr. Speaker, our troops have met with daily success in Iraq. However, some observers have not accurately portrayed the results of their efforts. Moreover, it is important to note that we are not the only country suffering casualties in the fight for a free Iraq. In addition to our Coalition allies, hundreds of Iraqi policemen and national guard members have been killed as they fight to ensure the future of their own country.

With respect to Afghanistan, it is quite clear that the Afghan government is progressing in securing modern rights for its people every day. Mr. Speaker, over 10 million people have registered to vote in the upcoming October presidential election in Afghanistan, and 5 million Afghans are now

enrolled in school. There are many civilian-military projects under way, and infrastructure reconstruction is beginning to reappear. The Coalition forces have changed the lives of the Afghans and are providing them with opportunities that they never dreamed they could have.

Mr. Speaker, in Afghanistan, we met with interim President Hamid Karzai. He was effusive in his thanks to America and the work of U.S. troops. In particular, he praised the work of Oklahoma's 45th Infantry Brigade that has worked so hard to train the Afghan Army. This is just one example of the countless accomplishments of our citizen soldiers from across our Nation. The Afghani Army is now fighting hard and performing well in the hunt for al Qaeda and the Taliban.

Mr. Speaker, I do not pretend to know when our global war on terrorism will end. This is not a war we sought. We engaged in hostilities only after being attacked. This is a war which has far-reaching implications and will determine the kind of world we leave for our children and grandchildren.

America has a clear choice. We can go the way of some who suggest that we withdraw into isolationism, or we can secure the peace for our progeny by expanding the frontiers of liberty and democracy into the Middle East. While the debate surrounding our actions is legitimate, I truly believe that the answer is clear if one takes the time to look at the implications of not vigorously prosecuting this war. To be secure at home, we must act forcefully abroad. In the war on terror, "fortune favors the bold."

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that our servicemen and citizen soldiers are doing fine work in representing the very best America has to offer.

THREATS MADE BY AZERBAIJAN AGAINST ARMENIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I want to bring attention to recent statements made by high-ranking government officials in Azerbaijan that threaten the security of Armenia as well as the efforts towards a peaceful settlement over the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict.

This issue, if not compellingly addressed by the administration, has the potential to undermine U.S. interests and American values in the strategically important Caucasus region.

I refer to the recent remarks made by officials in the government of President Aliyev calling into question the very existence of Armenia. For example, as reported by Radio Free Europe, the Azerbaijani Defense Minister spokesman called for Azerbaijan's takeover of the entire territory of Armenia and removal of the entire Armenian population from the Caucasus. He

went so far as to say, "Within the next 25 years there will exist no state of Armenia in the south Caucasus." Given Azerbaijan's history of aggression against Armenians, these remarks cannot be dismissed as mere rhetoric.

Furthermore, Azerbaijan recently blocked key NATO exercises in the country, due to their opposition towards having Armenian officers taking part in the exercises. In fact, in June 2003, Armenia served as the host country for similar exercises, to which Azerbaijani military forces were invited, yet refused to participate. This year, Armenia was one of several dozen countries due to participate, yet the initiative was blocked by Azerbaijan, which is continuing its efforts to undermine the prospects for peace in the Caucasus region.

Azerbaijan's threats again Armenia's survival reinforce our commitment to maintaining parity in U.S. military aid to Armenia and Azerbaijan. This arrangement means even more today than when it was first put in place, particularly in light of Baku's increasingly aggressive posture towards Armenia. Any tilt in military spending towards Azerbaijan could, in our view, destabilize the region by emboldening the new Azerbaijani leadership to continue their threats to impose a military solution of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict.

Just last week, the Republic of Armenia celebrated Independence Day marking 13 years of freedom from Soviet rule. We have seen considerable economic growth in the country. Despite the continuing illegal blockade by Turkey and Azerbaijan, a recent Wall Street Journal study found that Armenia remains the most economically free nation in the region. Today, Armenia is steadfast in its support of the U.S., as exhibited by their recent announcement of plans to send a unit of deminers, doctors and 50 trucks, including staff and drivers, to assist the Coalition forces in Iraq.

It is critical to note that Armenia is today, as it has always been, committed to the peace process and the terms agreed to in the Key West summit. Since the beginning of the Nagorno-Karabagh and Azerbaijan conflict, Armenia has been committed to finding a peaceful resolution. Moreover, I cannot stress enough the crucial role that the U.S. plays in the negotiations over Nagorno-Karabagh to help the people of this region find a lasting and equitable peace. These threats by Azerbaijan undermine these efforts and seriously complicate our diplomacy in the region. A failure on our part to forcefully and publicly confront the Azerbaijan government over these destabilizing threats would, in our view, send extremely dangerous signals to Azerbaijan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the United States takes action to condemn these remarks by the Azerbaijani government, and that we here in this Chamber do everything we can to en-

sure that all parties involved in this conflict make a genuine commitment towards peace and stability in the region.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. NORWOOD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CONYERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

TRANSLATION BACKLOG

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I want to extend the remarks of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) where he talked about what this Congress has been doing. I think we also should be afraid of what this Congress is not doing. I would like to talk this evening for just a few minutes about an Inspector General's report which has been issued that looked at the behavior of the FBI and their translation of intelligence tapes that they were gathering since September 11.

Now, we found out on September 10, 2001, the day before the horrendous attacks in New York and Pennsylvania and at the Pentagon, that a couple of conversations that were intercepted by the National Security Agency had a couple of messages. One said "Tomorrow is zero hour." Another said, "The match is about to begin."

The problem, Mr. Speaker, is that these messages were not translated into English to be analyzed by the FBI until several days later. So this Congress and this President decided to slightly increase the funding for interpreters and linguists to be able to help gather some of this information because if we were able to gather the information and translate it, we would know what the enemy was thinking.

So the FBI Inspector General did a report analyzing where we are today, several years later. Checked us out. Mr. Speaker, 120,000 hours of tape, of potentially valuable terrorism-related